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THE VILLAGE ENGLISH SPARROW IN THE GRAIN-RAISING REGION.—

In the admirable article by Mr. Frank C. Gates, which appeared in the last Wilson Bulletin, in speaking of Havana, Illinois, there occurs the following: "The town, itself, is surprisingly free from weed patches of more than a very limited extent. For this reason, perhaps, the English sparrows, which are naturally attracted to the dwelling places of man, not finding sufficient food there, flock in groups of 25 to 150 and invade the wheat and clover fields. It was noticed repeatedly that whenever English sparrows invaded crop land it was virtually always in good-sized flocks." This calls forth two questions: Does the English sparrow ever eat weed seed to any appreciable extent when a grain diet is procurable? And is not the habit above described, one that is common to all English sparrows in the grain-raising belt?

Year after year my observations have been, that as soon as the kernels of growing grain are of edible size all the village sparrows, not held by nest duties, flock daily to the nearest grain fields; and that there is no cessation of their visits until the last shock of oats, rye, and barley has been taken to the threshing machine. Frequently, with the flocks may be seen young birds not yet able to feed themselves, to which their mothers bring food, sometimes feeding them with six or eight insertions of the bill, each insertion unquestionably showing the delivery of a kernel of grain. The toll upon the farmers' unharvested crops in the aggregate must be a vast amount. At this season, while driving along country roads, one sees the English sparrows that usually swarm about the farmers' pig-pens and chicken yards have deserted these resorts for a time and have betaken themselves to the grain fields.

This "avian rat" proves a pest to the poultry raiser, because of its pilfering the soft foods prepared for little chicks. Some people have dealt successfully with the thief by catching it in traps placed on the tops of the coops. For this purpose mouse-traps are used—the sort that consists of a wire spring fastened upon a small block of wood; merely one more device against the forces of the mighty.

National, Iowa.

ALTHEA R. SHERMAN.

RARE BIRDS AT CANTON, OHIO.—The spring migration of 1911 has been especially interesting here, because of the visitation of several rare species. These were, with one exception, water fowl, and were observed chiefly on Meyer's Lake, a sheet of water about three-quarters of a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide, situated two and one-half miles west of Canton.